

VALE FRED STEVENS

Mr. Frederick William Stevens, affectionately known as Fred to all who worked with him, spent a life time in communications commencing at a very early age when assisting his father, who was a lighthouse keeper at Wilsons Promotory, to signal ships with flags and lights. In 1911 he started work as a PMG telegraphist and early in the Great War joined the Navy as a radio operator. After the war he obtained the first Australian Flight radio operators licence issued, joined Qantas and eventually became navigator and pilot. He also held a Flight Engineers licence. Tiring of the continual travel he commenced duty as station engineer at 4QG Brisbane before that station was taken over by the ABC.

During 1937, when the Civil Aviation Board was established, Fred re-entered the Commonwealth Public Service, as a radio inspector. During the early war years he was seconded to the RAAF as a signals officer and being a licensed pilot was active in liaison work between DCA and service radio stations, flying himself around in Tiger Moth and other similar aircraft. After the war years he resumed duty with the Department as Superintendent of Airways Operations, Brisbane Area and then served in Sydney prior to promotion to the position of Superintendent of Communications, Central Office.

At the end of his long career in the various spheres of communications, Fred was awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year honours list and received his decoration from Her Majesty in person, an event which he referred to as 'the proudest moment of his life'. Late in November 1962, Fred retired from the Department and it is now our sad duty to record his passing on the 5th October, 1966, after a short illness. To his wife and family we extend our deepest sympathy. Vale Fred Stevens.